INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Crofton, Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108141

Headteacher: Mrs L J Fowler

Reporting inspector: David Figures 10269

Dates of inspection: $18^{th} - 19^{th}$ November 2002

Inspection number: 246761

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 7 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Slack Lane

Crofton Wakefield

Postcode: WF4 1JHJ

Telephone number: 01924 303905

Fax number: 01924 303906

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Bennett

Date of previous inspection: 10th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members				
10269	David Figures	Registered inspector		
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector		
2607	Brian Griffiths	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International Upperton House The Avenue Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 3YB

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a community junior school of average size in the village of Crofton, near Wakefield, catering for 214 boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds between seven and eleven years of age. Although the school draws most pupils from the village and from those who have attended the neighbouring infant school, a quarter comes from outside the immediate area. A significant proportion joins the school during their junior school years: about one third of Year 6 started after the beginning of Year 3. Almost all pupils are white. English is an additional language for a very small proportion, who are all beyond the early stages of language acquisition. Seven per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a third of them relating to physical disability and emotional and behavioural disability. One per cent has statements of special educational need. Both these proportions are below average. The attainment of children on entry to the school is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Crofton Junior School is very effective. Standards in science are well above average; in English and mathematics they are above average. The quality of teaching is good with examples of excellent practice. Leadership is very strong and the management of the school and its programme for improvement is very good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach very high standards in science and above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils display very good attitudes and they become well rounded and mature young people.
- A rich curriculum is well taught.
- Very good leadership and management have brought about very good improvement.

What could be improved

• There are no issues for the school to address.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in November 1997. Standards have improved markedly, as a result of strong subject leadership, especially in science and information and communication technology, and the issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been tackled well. English and mathematics standards, formerly satisfactory, are now good. In science, standards, formerly average, are now well above average. Standards in design and technology have improved from poor to satisfactory and in information and communication technology they have improved from unsatisfactory to good. Pupils' very good attitudes are better than those reported last time and attendance has improved. The quality of teaching has greatly improved under the influence of better monitoring, that has identified areas for further improvement on which all concerned have worked successfully. The curriculum, which last time did not meet statutory requirements, is now good. The assessment of pupils' progress and its use in the planning of later work, an issue last time, is now in place for all subjects and is very good in English, mathematics and science. Educational leadership and the management of the school are now very strong. The school is well placed to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

	compared with				
Performance in:		similar schools			
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	С	В	С	В	
mathematics	С	В	В	А	
science	С	В	А	А	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in 2002 continued a rising trend in mathematics and a sharply rising trend in science which began in 1999. They compare closely with the standards of work seen in these subjects during the inspection. Standards achieved in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are above average and those in science well above average. Well-planned improvements to the teaching of literacy, especially writing, have resulted in the current Year 6 pupils reaching above-average standards in English. Standards in information and communication technology are above average and in design and technology they are average. Both boys and girls, including those pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are achieving well during their time in the school, in response to stringent but well-judged targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils come to school with enthusiasm and work hard when they are there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is orderly and friendly and pupils behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are responsible and mature and get on well with each other and with all the adults who work with them.
Attendance	Very good: well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good in English, including literacy, and in mathematics, including numeracy. This ensures that pupils learn at a good rate and so reach above-average standards. Much of the teaching of science is outstanding: the teachers' provision for very well planned practical work captures the pupils' imagination and propels them to levels of knowledge, understanding and skill which are well above average.

Particular strengths in teaching include the ways in which many other subjects are used to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy and the way in which computer skills are used to enhance work in other subjects. The best teaching is characterised not only by a broad range of teaching skills but also by an infectious enthusiasm that engages pupils interest and leads to high work rates. In many lessons pupils respond eagerly to teachers' friendly but demanding approach so that relationships thrive.

All pupils reap considerable benefit, but particularly good teaching for pupils with special educational needs, by both teachers and teaching assistants, ensures that these pupils make very good progress towards their learning targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It meets statutory requirements. It is well planned and balanced so that it meets the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. The contribution of educational visits and visitors and the clubs held out of school hours gives depth to the pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. It is well managed and organised. Pupils make good progress because all adults plan the teaching from thoughtful individual learning programmes that consider their needs fully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The well-judged provision meets the needs of these pupils well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop as considerate, thoughtful young people. Pupils enjoy the good range of opportunities to take responsibility, to live in a community and to learn about their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work and monitoring their progress are particularly well developed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage- ment by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior staff have a very clear vision of where they want the school to go and have established effective systems to achieve it.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Well-informed governors firmly support the head and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. It enables the school consistently to improve its practice.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is carefully directed at well chosen priorities so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit. The school obtains the best value for money it spends.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most		What parents would like to see improved	
Pupils ar about sc	re well motivated and enthusiastic hool.	Information about children's progress.Liaison with parents.	
•	ake good progress because much is d of them.	- Liaison with parents.	
The scho	ool brings out talent in the pupils.		
Teaching	g is good.		

The inspection team endorses the parents' positive comments. It does not support parents' criticisms. There are many points at which the school shares information - both written and in dialogue - about pupils and their progress with parents. Most parents think the school works closely with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in science are very high; they are above average

- 1. Parents are very satisfied by the standards achieved by their children and with good reason, because of the way they are improving. Successive generations of pupils have achieved better results in the National Curriculum tests in each of the past four years.
- 2. Nowhere has this been more marked than in science, where standards are now very high. After 1999, when pupils' science standards were average, the annual results rose significantly. From 2000 the improvement was better than the national average and continued to the point when, in 2002, test results were well above average, and well ahead of results from schools where a similar proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The more able pupils have been achieving well also: the proportion of pupils obtaining above-average results has more than trebled in the period. The very good achievement arises from the outstanding quality of much of the teaching that pupils experience, most notably in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are stimulated and challenged and so make very good progress. For example, Year 6 pupils working on pitch in musical instruments could solve problems accurately because of their careful observation, and their knowledgeable predictions. Most used suitable scientific language to explain their findings and the higher attainers could explain convincingly why the pitch of the woodwind instrument was high or low.
- 3. The picture in mathematics and English is similar. Although the improvement in mathematics is not quite so marked as in science, it is significant. Results are improving faster than those in most schools. The higher-attaining pupils are doing almost as well as in science but overall standards are above average (rather than well above) because of a higher proportion of pupils whose marks are below the level appropriate for eleven year olds, This reflects their attainment in the subject when they joined the school: achievement is good for all pupils when their individual starting points are taken into account. As the result of good teaching, pupils develop good mathematical understanding as well as skill. This is because of the way the teachers insist on pupils explaining their working, a practice which gives the lessons a strong sense of mathematical purpose.
- 4. The pattern of results in English is less consistent. In 2002 the results were near the national average, having been above it the previous year (though they were high when compared with schools where pupils have a similar free meals entitlement). Nevertheless, as a result of well-judged management intervention, standards are beginning to rise again and the work of the present pupils is on course to be above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are achieving well in the light of their attainment on entry to the school. They speak confidently and clearly. Standards of writing are above average. The best displays a sure touch, consciously adopting different styles for different purposes, and is technically accurate. Some pupils have good ideas which are not matched by the necessary skills of composition. Standards in reading are nearer the average: the best readers are accurate, but read without good expression. Average and below-average readers make mistakes, often when they guess words from the initial letter or from its shape.
- 5. Standards have improved well in areas criticised in the last inspection report. In design and technology, standards, formerly poor, are now satisfactory, under the influence of a better focused curriculum and a clearly presented scheme of work. The assessment of pupils' work is better and contributes appropriately to planning future lessons. Resources are

better. As a result, most pupils now show sound designing and making skills with reasonable skills in evaluation and the subsequent improvement to their work.

6. Information and communication technology standards, formerly unsatisfactory are now good. Greatly enhanced resources and increased staff confidence are the main contributory factors, alongside very good subject leadership and a well-ordered, rich curriculum. Information and communication technology now permeates the whole school and both benefits as a subject in its own right and – in its strong cross curricular role – contributes from a position of strength to other subjects.

Pupils display very good attitudes, work hard and become well rounded and mature young people.

- 7. 'Children can't wait to get to school. They always have the right attitude.' 'Pupils are totally motivated.' Parents at a meeting to discuss their perceptions of the school made clear their satisfaction with the personal development of their children. Pupils, especially older pupils, come to school regularly and punctually: attendance is well above the national average. They clearly enjoy joining in with the varied activities which are offered both in and out of the classroom. In class, pupils respond to the teachers' open and direct approach and to the interesting work prepared for them with energy, enthusiasm and commitment. In a science lesson, for example, the pupils' very close attention was a direct result of the teacher's expert and detailed exposition. In an English lesson, where the very good planning was shared with the pupils, they understood the lesson's framework and knew what they were to learn and why. Accordingly, pupils were fully engaged and persevered with their tasks. Pupils work well in pairs and groups, exploring and developing ideas. In an environment of very good relationships, behaviour is frequently very good. Occasionally if the teacher's purpose is not clear, if the planning does not focus sufficiently on pupils' learning or if pupils are not challenged enough, then attention wanders and pupils become restless.
- 8. Pupils display their maturity in many ways and they are helped in this by the well-considered situations created by the school for the purpose. Some are routine but important tasks which contribute to the smooth running of the school, such as hearing younger pupils read, telephone duty in the dinner hour, or being a special friend to a pupil new to the school.
- 9. Pupils particularly like the School Council, from which they derive a sense of ownership of what happens in school. As one Year 6 School Council member succinctly put it, 'If there are any problems, we sort them out.' Pupils describe with pride how issues are discussed in each class using time set aside for the purpose. The class representatives raise them at the Council and then report back. The chair and secretary are pupils who not only made a presentation on the subject to the governors but also demonstrated the School Council idea to a local conference, in the words of the parents, 'confidently and with poise and style.'

A rich curriculum is well taught.

- 10. The curriculum is much improved since the time of the last inspection when it fell short of statutory requirements. In the two subjects particularly at issue, design and technology and information and communication technology, the curriculum is now well organised, resulting in much improved standards.
- 11. The rich curriculum for information and communication technology is particularly successful. It is based on an up-to-date policy and well-constructed schemes of work which interpret the National Curriculum well and reflect the needs of pupils. There is a big range of good opportunities for learning and for applying what has been learned to different situations.

The cross-curricular role of the subject is very strong: effective links are made with, for example, art, history, geography, religious education and especially English with the result that standards in all of them, and in information and communication technology, benefit.

- 12. The good framework for the curriculum in Years 3 and 4, where some pupils are in mixed-age classes, provides well for their needs. The two-year cycle ensures that the National Curriculum, with personal social and health education, is covered without unplanned repetition. The personal social and health education and citizenship strands are well integrated and connections are made between them and class discussion periods (Circle Time) and the School Council. Short-term planning draws well on the framework, is supported by a good rationale and incorporates suitable assessment opportunities.
- 13. Provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and physical disability is strong and successful. Work based on well-constructed individual education programmes includes the pupils to the fullest possible extent in the activities of the rest of the class. It also offers alternative tasks, or variations of pace, extra resources, or if necessary a different level of expectation to ensure pupils work at a level which suits them. Realistic individual targets let pupils know what they need to learn and when completed, confirm the progress made. Provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties has many positive features, but is more difficult to secure successfully because some problems are very long term and deeply rooted.
- 14. Educational visits and extra-curricular activity contribute well to the richness and depth of pupils' learning on more than one level. Pupils describe with enthusiasm the visit to the museum where they dressed and lived in seventeenth century style. A residential visit to Whitby provides fieldwork experience and enhances the curriculum for geography, history and art. Another, for outdoor and adventurous activities, also gives opportunity for social and personal development. One girl described learning to abseil: 'It was scary but it made me more confident.' Parents describe how very popular the after-school clubs are with their children. The activities cater for the arts, music, dance, sport and computers and in any one week about a hundred pupils about half the school join in.
- 15. The rich curriculum is well taught because of the skills and enthusiasm teachers bring to the task and the expert way in which they make the different subjects relate to each other. The quality of teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where there is some excellent practice. Good overall, teaching is much improved on that reported last time when the quality of the teaching in one lesson in five was unsatisfactory.
- 16. Pupils respond well to teachers' energy, commitment and enthusiasm by concentrating and so learning at a fast rate. For example, in an excellent Year 6 English lesson, which as pupils recognised had a clear place in a week of progressive work, pupils did well. They were fully engaged, eager, keen to offer ideas because the style of the teacher's presentation and her good-humoured, direct manner appealed to them.
- 17. Pupils also learn well because of the teachers' very well developed skills. Planning at its best is exemplary and expectations of pupils' application and attitude are very high. Explanations, based on a very good knowledge of the subject, are clear so that pupils quickly understand; good, clearly expressed instructions ensure pupils know what they have to do and can get on quickly. Questioning is particularly strong: many questions are followed by another arising from the answer to the first, which requires pupils to extend and justify their answers. There is no sitting back after offering a contribution: pupils have to think and be ready to refine their ideas. The last few minutes of lessons are well used to review progress and prepare for the next: as a result, pupils know what and how much they have learned and where learning will go next.

- 18. Lessons move fast so that pupils are carried along by the pace and no time is wasted. Resources are well used. The use of the inter-active whiteboards injects pace into the lessons: in a mathematics lesson on shape, previously prepared material projected on to the board quickly got the lesson off to a good start. In an English lesson, the text to be studied, prepared beforehand, was instantly available when needed but not before. When discussing sentence structure, pupils were able to demonstrate their ideas and suggestions on the board regardless of their writing skills. The contributions of the additional adults are generally well used, particularly to ensure the inclusion of pupils who need extra help. In one instance pupils with special educational needs were closely involved because the support teacher sitting with them prompted and encouraged them and ensured they had a chance to contribute. In another, a pupil temporarily disabled after an injury was fully included by having his work prepared for him on a laptop computer.
- 19. Much of the teaching of science is outstanding because the very good mixture of subject expertise, good relationships and well articulated explanation creates a real sense of scientific excitement and results in pupils listening carefully and responding vigorously. Activities are carefully planned with levels of challenge very well matched to pupils' attainment. As a result, everybody can do the work, but they all have to think before acting. During the lessons, teachers constantly challenge individual pupils to think clearly by insisting that they explain precisely what they mean. This results in pupils making good progress and achieving very high standards.
- 20. The school has made very good progress in these aspects of its work since the last inspection. Given the well-managed monitoring and support now available for teachers, it is well placed to continue to improve.

Very good leadership and management have brought about very good improvement.

- 21. The headteacher, supported by very effective key staff, has orchestrated effective and rapid change from the time of the last inspection and has presided over the very good improvement which is a feature of the school's recent history. She has done this because of her very clear view of where the school is to go and by creating a cohesive staff team to share the vision. Through careful monitoring and evaluation she is well informed about all aspects of the school's life, and has established effective systems to sustain what is good and encourage development in areas needing improvement. Parents are understandably emphatic in their view that the administration of the school has improved in recent years.
- 22. Delegation to senior staff is clear and the coordinators of key areas, including the assessment of pupils' progress and needs, are very effective in promoting higher standards. Assessment in particular is now very thorough. It is well managed and is used equally effectively to set individual targets for pupils and to guide planning both in the short and longer term. Similarly the subject leadership of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is very good, and contributes well to improving standards.
- 23. In English the coordinator's repertoire of measures for improvement includes the careful review of standards achieved by pupils, including the test results, to draw out implications for teaching and the curriculum. Planning, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils are all carefully monitored and a programme of staff development prepared where attention is needed. Pupils work to their own explicit targets. A focus on writing is a school-wide management priority. The burgeoning use of information and communication technology right across the school supports English well. Where pupils have special educational needs, whether through disability or injury, information and communication technology is particularly supportive.

- 24. The coordination of work for pupils with special educational needs is also strong. By means of considerable expertise and knowledge of the school and the pupils, it ensures the successful provision of rich opportunities for them, thus ensuring that pupils progress well.
- 25. The well informed governing body provides the headteacher and staff with well-focused support. Governors have wisely paid particular attention to English, mathematics and science, together with information and communication technology, as school priorities up to the present.
- 26. The school's provision for the pupils is at a cost per pupil which is high compared with other primary schools. It is also high compared with junior schools of a similar size. Nonetheless its good provision and the high standards reached by pupils ensure that the value for money it provides is good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

27. There are no issues for the school to address

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	1	4	7	0	0	0
Percentage	29	6	24	41	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	214	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

_	English as an additional language	No of pupils
	Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6	National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	26	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	24	22	29
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	49	46	54
Percentage of pupils	School	86 (83)	81 (83)	95 (98)
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	26	23	31
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	25	24	26
	Total	51	47	57
Percentage of pupils	School	89 (87)	82 (85)	100 (100)
at NC level 4 or above	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y3 - Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	456199
Total expenditure	455238
Expenditure per pupil	2178
Balance brought forward from previous year	29090
Balance carried forward to next year	30051

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

Number of questionnaires returned

86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	41	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	51	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	48	7	1	0
The teaching is good.	55	48	7	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	42	9	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	27	3	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	43	10	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	62	29	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	36	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	29	6	0	2